



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Wyoming State Office
P.O. Box 1828
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82003-1828

January 2, 2002

Dear Reader:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared this Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to document and disclose the results of environmental analysis. A copy of this document has been provided to you for your review. You also may view the DEIS on the Wyoming BLM homepage (www.wy.blm.gov) and Powder River Basin EIS web site at <http://www.prb-eis.org>. Copies of the DEIS also are available for public inspection at the following BLM offices:

Bureau of Land Management
Wyoming State Office
5353 Yellowstone Road
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82009

Bureau of Land Management
Buffalo Field Office
1425 Fort Street
Buffalo, Wyoming 82834

Bureau of Land Management
Casper Field Office
2987 Prospector Drive
Casper, Wyoming 82604-2968

We recommend that you begin by reading the Preface of the DEIS, which will orient you to the document.

As a result of the analysis documented in this DEIS, our preferred alternative, at this time, is Alternative 1. We will not; however, make a final decision until we have reviewed comments on the DEIS and completed the FEIS.

Public comments on this DEIS will be accepted for 90 days following the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes its Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*. The BLM will notify all parties on the project mailing list of the dates when comments will be accepted. During this time, you are welcome to submit written comments.

During the comment period, the BLM will hold public meetings (anticipated during March 2002) or other public involvement activities. The BLM will notify the public of these meetings or activities through public notices, news media releases, the Wyoming BLM homepage (www.wy.blm.gov), the project's homepage (www.prb-eis.org), or mailings. These notifications will provide at least 15-days' notice of public meetings or gatherings and 30-days' notice of written comment requests.

The agencies are required to respond in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) to all substantive comments submitted on the DEIS. The comment period mentioned above provides you, the public, with an opportunity to make an impact on the content of the document and; therefore, potentially affect the decision that will be made after the FEIS is released. We ask that your comments relate directly to the DEIS, that you are as specific as possible, and that you cite the location or locations in the document on which you are commenting. Although public opinions for or against the alternatives are of interest, often they are not useful for modifying an EIS. Additionally, they seldom have any bearing on the criteria the agencies must use to make decisions regarding proposals. Substantive comments should: (1) give any new information that could alter conclusions; (2) show why or how analysis or assumptions are flawed; (3) show errors in data, sources, or methods; or (4) request assessment clarifications that bear on conclusions.

Please retain this copy of the DEIS for future reference because the FEIS may be published in abbreviated format. If you have any questions or require additional copies of this document, please contact Paul Beels 307-684-1168. We appreciate your interest in the management of the public lands.

Comments on the DEIS should be sent to Paul Beels, Project Manager, Bureau Land management Buffalo Field Office, 1425 Fort Street, Buffalo, Wyoming 82834-2436.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan R. Pierson", is written over a horizontal line.

Alan R. Pierson

State Director

**Draft Environmental Impact Statement
Powder River Basin Oil and Gas Project
Campbell, Converse, Johnson, and Sheridan Counties**

Lead Agency:	Bureau of Land Management Buffalo Field Office Buffalo, Wyoming
Cooperating Agencies:	Bureau of Land Management Casper Field Office Casper, Wyoming USDA Forest Service Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest Douglas, Wyoming State of Wyoming
For Further Information, Contact:	Paul Beels Bureau of Land Management 1425 Fort Street Buffalo, Wyoming 82834-2436 (307) 684-1168

Abstract

A group of oil and gas companies (Companies) has notified the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service of their intent to develop additional coal bed methane (CBM) resources in Wyoming's Powder River Basin. The Proposed Action includes drilling, completing, operating, and reclaiming almost 39,400 new CBM wells and constructing, operating, and reclaiming various ancillary facilities needed to support the new wells. The Proposed Action would occur in an almost 8,000,000-acre Project Area. Drilling would begin in 2002 and continue for 10 years.

Three alternatives were considered in detail. They were Alternative 1 — the Proposed Action, Alternative 2 — the Proposed Action with Reduced Emission Levels and Expanded Disposed Water Handling Scenario, and Alternative 3 — No Action. Alternative 1 consisted of a combination of the Companies' proposal and the BLM's Reasonable Foreseeable Development Scenario. Alternative 2 was developed in response to issues raised during the public and agency scoping process. This alternative, which consists of Alternative 2A and 2B, would replace some of the proposed gas-fired compressors with electrical compressors and would involve less water discharged directly to the sub-watersheds. The No Action alternative is required by the National Environmental Policy Act for comparison to other alternatives analyzed in the EIS. For this project, the No Action Alternative would not authorize additional natural gas development on Federal leases within the Project Area. Drilling could continue on State and private leases,

The Wyoming State Director is the BLM's Authorized Officer responsible for preparing this Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Preface

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) usually is not read like a book — from chapter one to the end. The best way to read an EIS depends on your interests. You may be more interested in effects, whereas others might have more interest in the details of the proposed project or be more concerned about what opportunities were made available to the public to be involved in the environmental assessment process. Many readers probably just want to know what is being proposed and how it will affect them.

This document follows the format established in the National Environmental Policy Act's regulations (40 CFR 1500 to 1508). The following paragraphs outline information contained in the chapters and appendices so readers may find the parts of interest without having to read the entire document.

- *Summary*: contains a short, simple discussion to provide the reader and the decision makers with a sketch of the more important aspects of the EIS. The reader can obtain additional, more-detailed information from the actual text of the EIS.
- *Chapter 1 — Purpose and Need*: identifies the proposed action and describes the purpose of and need for the proposed action, history of oil and gas activities in the Powder River Basin, decisions to be made by the agencies, agencies' roles and responsibilities, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, and other permits required.
- *Chapter 2 — Public Participation, Issue Identification, and Alternative Development*: describes the Proposed Action, the significant or key issues associated with the Proposed Action, and alternatives to that action, including the no action alternative. Action alternatives that meet the purpose and need were developed by the agencies in response to one or more of the key issues. Alternatives considered but dropped from detailed consideration are identified along with the rationale for not including them in the analysis. This chapter also provides a comparative analysis of the environmental effects of the primary alternatives to provide a clear basis of choice among options for the decision maker and public. The lead agency's preferred alternative is identified.
- *Chapter 3 — Affected Environment*: describes the present condition of the environment that would be affected by implementation of the proposed action or any action alternative.
- *Chapter 4 — Environmental Consequences*: describes the probable direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to the human environment that would result from implementing the Proposed Action or alternatives. The discussion also addresses the short-term uses versus long-term productiv-

ity, unavoidable impacts, and irreversible or irretrievable impacts. Reasonably foreseeable activities near the proposed project are identified.

- *Chapter 5 — Land Use Planning and Management*: contains the analysis of the alternatives for conformance with the Buffalo Resource Area Resource Management Plan, Platte River Resource Management Plan, and Medicine Bow National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.
- *Chapter 6 — Consultation with Others*: identifies the agencies, companies, and organizations consulted as well as the cooperating agencies.
- *Chapter 7 — Preparers and Contributors*: identifies the people involved in the research, writing, and internal review of the draft EIS.
- *Chapter 8 — Distribution and Review of the Draft EIS*: lists the agencies, organizations, and individuals who received a copy of the draft EIS.
- *Chapter 9 — Glossary*: describes the technical terms used in the draft EIS.
- *Chapter 10 — References Cited*: lists the references cited in the draft EIS.
- *Index*: contains cross references and identifies the pages where key topics can be found.
- *Appendices*: contain technical and non-technical information that is important to full comprehension of the NEPA analysis, but was too long to be included in the primary chapters.

Acronyms and Abbreviations used in this EIS

ADT	Average Daily Traffic
APD	Application for Permit to Drill
AUM	Animal Unit Month
BACT	Best Available Control Technology
bcf	Billion Cubic Feet
BFO	Buffalo Field Office
BFOA	Buffalo Field Office Area
BLM	U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management
BMP	Best Management Practices
CBM	Coal Bed Methane
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFO	Casper Field Office
CFOA	Casper Field Office Area
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
cfs	Cubic Feet per Second
CMF	Central Metering Facility
COA	Conditions of Approval
COE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
CSU	Controlled Surface Use
CWA	Clean Water Act
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
FERC	Federal Energy Regulatory Agency
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act
FS	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
FWS	U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service
gpm	Gallons per Minute
HP	Horsepower
kV	Kilovolt
LAD	Land Application Disposal
LRMP	Land and Resource Management Plan
mcf	Thousand Cubic Feet
mmcf	Million Cubic Feet
MMRP	Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Plan
MOC	Memorandum of Cooperation
MW	Megawatt
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NL	No Lease
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NOI	Notice of Intent
NOS	Notice of Staking
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	National Resource and Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places

NSO	No Surface Occupancy
PM ₁₀	Respirable Particulate Matter less than 10 microns in aerodynamic diameter
POD	Plan of Development
ppm	Parts per Million
PRB	Powder River Basin
PSD	Prevention of Significant Deterioration
psi	Pounds per Square Inch
RFD	Reasonably Foreseeable Development
RFFA	Reasonable Foreseeable Future Actions
RMP	Resource Management Plan
ROD	Record of Decision
ROS	Recreational Opportunity Spectrum
ROW	Right-of-Way
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SLT	Standard Lease Terms
SOI	Scenic Integrity Objectives
SUP	Special Use Permit
SUPO	Surface Use Plan of Operations
TBNG	Thunder Basin National Grassland
TCP	Traditional Cultural Properties
TDS	Total Dissolved Solids
TL	Timing Limitation
TSS	Total Suspended Solids
USC	United States Code
USDC	U.S. Department of Commerce
USDI	U.S. Department of the Interior
USDOT	U.S. Department of Transportation
USGS	U.S. Department of Interior, Geological Survey
VQO	Visual Quality Objective
VRM	Visual Resource Management
WDEQ	Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality
WDOT	Wyoming Department of Transportation
WGFD	Wyoming Game and Fish Department
WHMA	Wildlife Habitat Management Area
WOGCC	Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission
WSEO	Wyoming State Engineer's Office
WSGS	Wyoming State Geological Survey